



**United States Department of Justice  
United States Attorney's Office  
District of Minnesota**

**Frank J. Magill,  
United States Attorney**

David Anderson, Public Affairs Specialist  
(612) 664-5684; cell: (612) 730-2251

# **News Release**

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## **Four indicted for distributing methamphetamine**

Four individuals were charged in two separate indictments this week involving the distribution of the highly addictive and dangerous drug, methamphetamine.

In the first indictment, two Minnesotans were indicted Aug. 11 in Minneapolis in connection with distributing methamphetamine in northern Minnesota.

Robert Charles Gutz, 30, St. Paul, was charged with one count of conspiracy to distribute methamphetamine; one of count of possession with intent to distribute methamphetamine; one count of possession of a firearm in furtherance of a drug-trafficking offense and one count of being a felon in possession of a handgun.

Mindy Lea Lackore, 29, Newport, was charged with one count of conspiracy, one count of possession with intent to distribute methamphetamine and one count of possession of a firearm in furtherance of a drug trafficking offense.

Their indictment alleges that from 2007 to June 25, 2008, the defendants knowingly and intentionally conspired with each other and others to distribute 500 or more grams of a substance containing a detectable amount of methamphetamine. It also alleges that on June 25 Gutz and Lackore knowingly and intentionally possessed with intent to distribute approximately 198 grams of a substance containing a detectable amount of methamphetamine.

The indictment alleges that on June 25 Gutz and Lackore knowingly possessed a .45-caliber handgun in furtherance of a drug-trafficking offense. Gutz had been previously convicted a felony crimes in three Minnesota counties from 2000 to 2003, including fleeing police in a motor vehicle (Ramsey) and drug-related crimes in both Dakota and Hennepin counties.

According to a Minnesota Bureau of Criminal Apprehension (BCA) affidavit, the Carlton County Sheriff's Office received a complaint about an individual acting suspiciously at a local business on June 25, and received a description of the vehicle the individual was driving. Officers stopped the vehicle and identified Gutz as a passenger.

Gutz refused to cooperate, took control of the vehicle and attempted to flee, the affidavit states. A 40-mile chase ensued, with Gutz exceeding speeds of 100 mph, and nearly striking two pedestrians during the chase.

The vehicle was stopped in Pine County and Gutz was arrested. During a search of the vehicle, officers recovered approximately 171 grams of methamphetamine, as well as packaging materials consistent with the drug-trafficking trade. In addition, \$10,000 was recovered from both the vehicle and Gutz.

If convicted, the defendants each face a potential maximum penalty of life in prison on the conspiracy count, 40 years on the distribution count, 10 years on the felon in possession count and a mandatory five-year sentence on the count of possession of a firearm in furtherance of a drug-trafficking crime. All sentences are determined by a federal district court judge.

This case is the result of an investigation by the BCA, the Carlton County Sheriff's Office and the Pine County Sheriff's Office, and is being prosecuted by Assistant U.S. Attorney Nancy E. Brasel

In the second, unrelated case, two Rochester men were each charged with one count of conspiracy to distribute methamphetamine. Pablo Margarito Luna, 34, and Artemio Felix-Mendoza, 29, were each indicted Aug. 11 in Minneapolis.

Their indictment alleges that from April 2008 through July 15, they knowingly and intentionally conspired with each other and others to distribute and possess with intent to distribute 500 or more grams of a substance containing a detectable amount of methamphetamine.

According to a Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) affidavit, law enforcement began investigating Luna in April 2008 and learned he had been distributing methamphetamine in the Rochester area for about four to five years. Officers made several arranged "controlled purchases" from Luna in June and July at Luna's residence. Luna was arrested on July 15 following a "controlled purchase."

Also on July 15, authorities arranged a "controlled purchase" from Felix-Mendoza, who was arrested following the transaction.

During an executed search warrant at Felix-Mendoza's residence, officers recovered a gallon-sized, zip-lock baggie containing approximately 14 ounces of methamphetamine, and baggie containing approximately 3 ounces of methamphetamine.

If convicted, Luna and Felix-Mendoza each face a potential maximum penalty of life in prison. All sentences are determined by a federal district court judge. This case is the result of an investigation by the South East Minnesota Drug Task Force, the DEA, the BCA and the Rochester Police Department, and is being prosecuted by Assistant U.S. Attorney Steven L. Schleicher.

proven guilty at trial.